Volume 9, No. 3 • December 28, 2001

Nation

Happy 2002

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Rupert River Protest

Chisasibi Christmas Miracle

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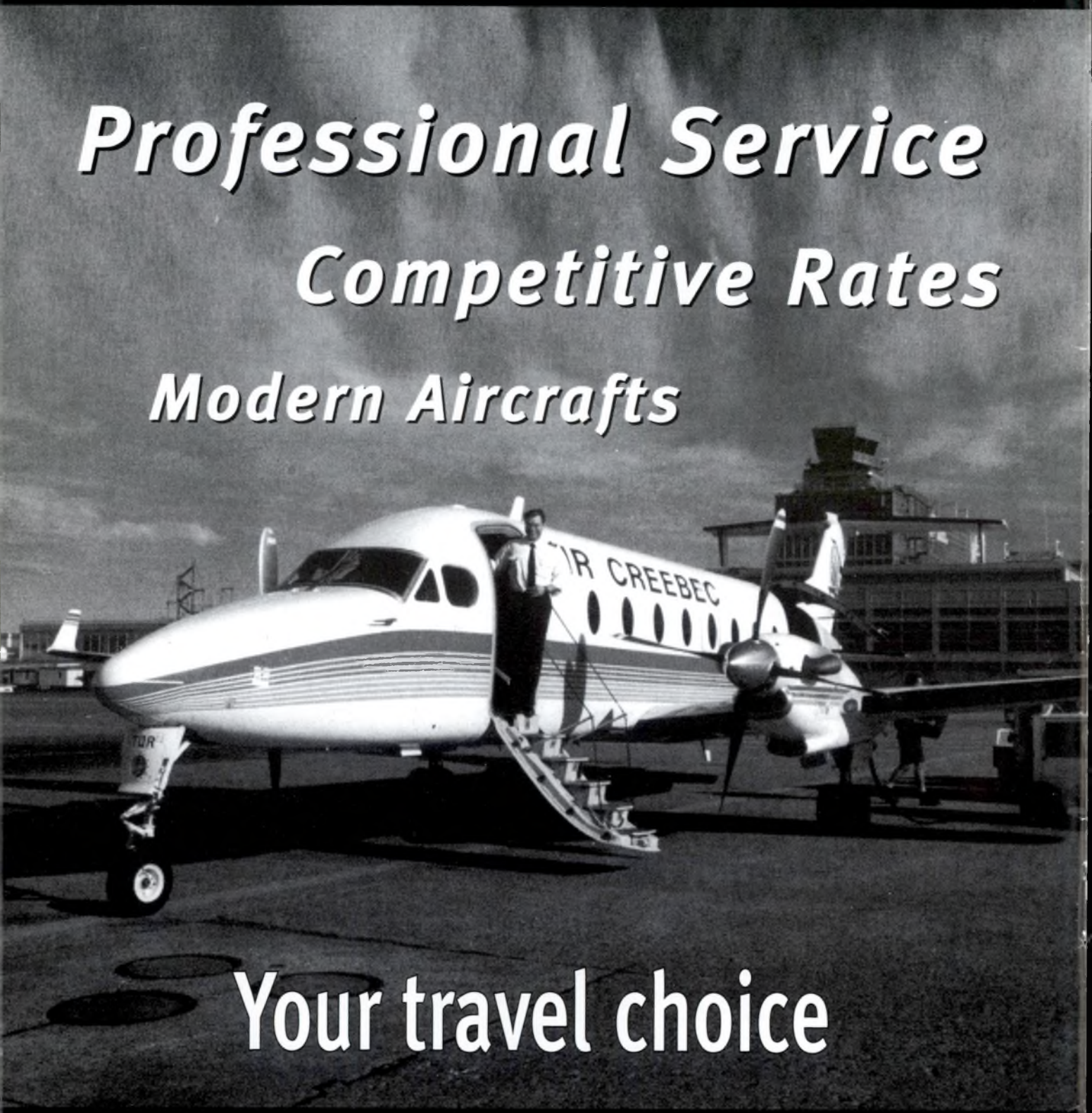

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Did the Creator choose our leaders?

I've heard it said that the Creator in his infinite wisdom chose the Cree leaders and that we should respect his or her choice. Several people, in letters-to-the-editor and in public meetings, have offered this view.

I have a few problems with that idea. First and foremost, it negates free will. We are supposed to have the freedom to choose between good and evil, or, in Christian terms, to have the choice to be damned or saved. If God choose for us, then free will is out the window and everything is predetermined. So it wouldn't really matter what we do. God would have already chosen those who will go to hell those destined for heaven before we are even born. Life in this scenario would just be a cosmic joke.

Secondly, it supposes that each and every decision the leaders make is made with the Creator's blessing and we should not question it. Once again, this goes against free will and suggests that anyone given a special mandate or mission to fulfill becomes an infallible superman or woman. Is this really how we believe the Creator works in people's lives?

Let us consider the question in terms of world leaders. Do we maintain that all world leaders are chosen by the Creator? If not, then this presupposes that we Crees are chosen by the Creator as his special people. A nice thought, but why are we so special? Is there a godliness about the Cree no other peoples have? If we think this then it implies a form of superiority, which in turn leads to racism. If the Creator singled out the Cree, it follows that all other peoples are inferior and should come under our rule. I don't believe this and I don't think Crees would be that racist.

If we follow the thinking that leaders are chosen by God, then all leaders in this world, whether political or spiritual or both, must also have been chosen by the Creator. If this is so, then to explain such leaders as Hitler, or the Rev. Jim Jones, who led his whole community to perform mass suicide with poison kool-aid, we must surely say that some leaders are chosen to test us and our free will. Otherwise the Creator would be more of a devil, considering some of the leaders we have seen on this planet. If such leaders are indeed chosen to test us, that leaves us with two possiblilities: we may choose to follow our leaders no matter what – even where their leadership leads to evil and death – to the peril of our immortal souls. Or, is it that we are being asked to respond by questioning our leaders, as often as we feel necessary, to test how well we are using our great gift of free will? This second possibility reminds us of the role of the community, and of the voice of each of its members in affirming or challenging the decisions and authority of its leaders. This is more in keeping with the traditional democratic voice that Crees have always used in community decision-making.

Thirdly, we must ask whether we are confusing different concepts of leadership when we talk about our political leaders as "chosen" by our Creator. Religious leaders may experience a "call" before becoming priests or ministers. It is a rare woman or man who can honestly say she or he has heard the Creator say in a vision, "I want you to run for chief or band councilor." The only leader of a people I've heard of who received a vision from the Creator was Moses. As Moses stood before the burning bush, the Creator told him to return to Egypt and free his people. He also went up Mount Sinai and spent forty days in closed conference with the Creator to receive the Ten Commandments. His reign as leader was marked by the Creator in the form of a staff being turned into a snake, plagues, the parting of the Red Sea and other biblical happenings. I must say that none of these signs has been evidenced by any of the Cree leadership to date. So until I see the Creator give such evidence that the Cree leadership is indeed chosen by the Creator and not by ballot, then I must disagree with this doctrine of infallibility.

Indeed, it could be said that it is through the wise partnership and responsibility of a community and its leaders that the Creator gives us the gift of healthy leadership – and this can only come where the voice of every member of the community is heeded and the ears and eyes of every leader are open to the concerns of the people. Just take a look at what happens when King David loses sight of this. This is where David is smitten with Bathsheba and sets up her husband to be killed in battle. For those of you unfamiliar with this story, read 1 Samual 11 & 12. Fortunately, the prophet Nathan has the courage to tell a story that shows him the error of his ways, and David has the humility to pay attention.

And lastly, on a ligher note, I know the Cree leadership can walk on water, but let's see you do it in the summertime and I'll be a believer.

Will Nicholls

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Protestors at the Rupert
Photographer: Neil Diamond
Cover Design: **Mona Laviolette**

Rez notes

Sonny Orr

Countdown to 00:00:01 01/01/02

The second after New Years Eve, 2001 will go down in history as the most remembered year in history, when the world held its breathe in disbelief and a sick astonishment came over the world during the following months after the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington D.C. We forevermore changed our outlook of humanity as we know it when another war was waged on the other side of the world to fight an unknown enemy whose culture is completely different from our own. Perhaps, one day, there will be world peace, as most beauty contestants wish for.

On another side, the New Year will bring either a new world awash with cash, houses and jobs from profitable ventures ... or the same old same-o past and present situations within the Cree world. I've prepared a wish list of some sorts for the Agreement in Principle and compared it to today's actuality,

Before AIP	After AIP
-Had only millions	-Will have only billions
-Had forests teeming with wildlife	-Forest teeming with loggers on leashes
-Chiefs in control	-Chiefs out of control
-Made southern communities benefit	-Hopefully Cree communities will benefit
-Same old guard	-Changing of the guards
-Funds invested in funny ventures	-Funds invested for us instead
-Created large regional companies	-Create many smaller community companies
-Had to go south to do business	-Southerners to come north to do business
-P.E.I, used as measuring device	-Labrador sized projects
-Poor trappers	-Rich trappers
-Baby boomer/residential syndrome	-JBNQA offspring
-Terra Nova	-Eeyou Estchee
-DIAND design housing	-Our own designs
-Po-ta-to	-Po-ta-to

Perhaps when we make up our minds as to exactly what we want from our lives and futures, then we'll be happy in knowing that we are going and doing exactly what we want as a nation. When the United States established their so called democratic system, they used native philosophies as an example as to what personal freedom and democracy was meant to be, except with capitalism thrown in there for all its worth. Let's use our traditional values as a guideline when this new era in nation building either happens or not. The future is in your minds, bring it out and make it so.

With the same regard, I wish the staff at the Nation seasons greetings, even though I've only seen you people only once or twice (and BeeZee not even once have I laid eyes on him!) I hope that somehow I've enlightened you and our readers, because so far, no one asked me to stop doing what I'm doing!

Happy New Year!

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Rupert River Protest

It was inevitable that there would be a demonstration to protest the planned diversion of the Rupert River. Initial negative reaction to the signing of the October 23 Agreement in principle (AIP) centered on the potential diversion of the river. The protest started late Sunday afternoon by the Rupert River bridge on the James Bay highway. Two hand painted signs that read, It's Our Life, with an arrow pointing to the river, went up. The small group stopped traffic, handed out pamphlets and a letter outlining grievances (See letter on Page 17). At one point, one of the protestors was struggling to steady a windblown sign when Nemaska Chief, George Wapachee stopped, listened to the protesters' message politely and drove through.

The group spent the night by the roadside and waited for the next day's traffic. "About 80 vehicles passed and stopped and 99% of them agreed with us. The one guy who said he supported the deal was drunk," said Roger Orr, a Nemaska resident.

The group was back the following day. After a song, a prayer and an offering to the river to strengthen his resolve, Orr was busy again waving traffic to a stop. "We don't want to see another river dammed because it's our provider. We believe it's a gateway to our own economy, through eco-tourism. We can share our values of the land, the animals, the universe and the Creator. We can do it ourselves. We believe Government funding is a spirit killer," said Orr. Seven vehicles parked by the river as the demonstrators handed out their leaflets.

Asked about the low turnout Orr claimed, "Other people are afraid to speak out. They didn't come to see us but we know they want to speak out."

Non-native Caribou hunters heading North and South paused on the bridge to take photographs of the rapids. "It's one of our last majestic rivers," said Orr. The white hunters, their trucks filled with caribou, expressed surprise and support when told of the fate of the river. One young driver from Wemindji was still undecided but his passenger feigned honking their horn in protest and smiled. Most of the traffic was Cree people coming back from the Cree Nation Invitational hockey and Broomball Tournament in Val d'Or, their cars and vans full. Several cars honked their horns to show support. "Some of them say, Agoodah!, Soohkh!" said Orr as a couple from Waskaganish, Bella and Johnny Hester flagged down another vehicle.

"It's one of the councillors!" someone says. Orr goes into his spiel. Later as councillor Willie Iserhoff drives off, Lindy Moar says, "He's been saying in church that this deal is a gift from God. That's mixing politics and religion."

When traffic slowed the group sheltered in their van folding pamphlets to distribute and improvised songs about the Agreement in Principle. They laughed as they sang, "We don't need no AIP" to the tune of Pink Floyd's, Another Brick in the Wall.

They were joined late Sunday night by a small caravan coming from Waskaganish. "There were about 20 people at the most. Sometime a small group would stay for an hour or two to show support. Most of the people who passed by supported us." said Lindy Moar.

The demonstration ended at midnight. The following week Roger Orr, Lindy Moar and others filed a petition in Nemaska demand a special band meeting to call for the election of a new chief. (See sidebar on page 5)

Neil Diamond

Election in Nemaska?

On Friday December 14, Nemaska residents filed a petition to hold a special band meeting to decide on whether to call an election for chief. The is in reaction to Chief George Wapachee's stand on the Agreement in Principle. Ten signatures are needed to call for a special band meeting. A majority vote for election is required at the meeting. "The meeting could be on Christmas Eve," said Lindy Moar, one of the signatories of the petition. "The petition was filed. The Chief has seen it." Said Moar, "I think it'll go through and we'll go ahead and have the elections. The people don't feel they're properly represented."

Josie Jimiken, Nemaska's representative on the Board of Compensation said another item on the agenda was a resolution passed in Nemaska calling for a moratorium on development in the territory. "The meeting will also be used to remind the Chief and the Grand Council about that resolution," The other item might be to give the Chief and Council the mandate not sign anything in regards to the Agreement in Principle," said Jimiken.

Chief George Wapachee, in Montreal for a Council board meeting said, "I was quite surprised. I first heard about it when it appeared in *The Gazette*. The council will have to look at it (the petition). It'll be up to the people,"

Asked whether he thought he'd still be chief in the new year, Wapachee said, "I think so. I have to take a positive approach."

In other election news,

There is a new Chief and Council in Chisasibi. Several days after the election of Abraham Rupert, his new council was elected. There were 34 nominees at the December 4 band meeting 34 nominees, 24 accepted. On December 11, 9 new councillors were elected, Bobby Neacappo, Elsie House, Former Chief Charles Bobbish, Larry House, William Ratt, Janie Moar, John E. Sam, Annie Bobbish and Samson Sandy. Three councillors in the former administration, Davey Bobbish, Emily Rondeau and Eric R. House were re-elected. Emily Rondeau is deputy chief.

The nomination of outgoing Chief Violet Pachanos as a councilor caused a minor stir at the nomination meeting. Around 10:30 p.m. there were 33 people nominated. A woman at the front of the room proposed the meeting be called to a close. The returning officer, Charlie Pepabano declared the nomination meeting closed. Brian Stewart shouted out Violet Pachanos' name as his nominee. The meeting was reopened and the former chief was officially nominated. Violet Pachanos declined her nomination.

Council of the Cree
Nation of Mistissini

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Neoskweskau Memorial Arena

15th annual

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January 17-20, 2002

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Category	# of teams	Inscription	Championship	Finalists
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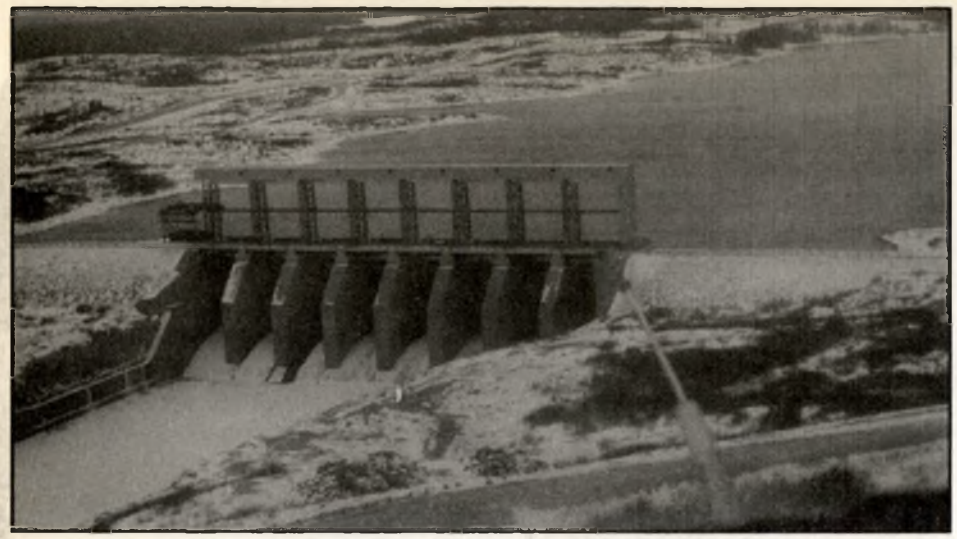
Men's Class "B"	8	$800.	$5,000.	$3,000.
Men's Class "C" 30 +	8	$700.	$3,000.	$1,500.
Old-Timers 40 +	8	$700.	$3,000.	$1,500.
Broomball "Open"	8	$800.	$5,000.	$3,000.
Women's Hockey	4	$500.	$2,000.	$1,000.

Prize money may vary depending on the number of teams that register. The first teams to register and pay the inscription fees will be accepted. NO EXCEPTIONS. All other teams will be placed on stand-by.

All teams must send their inscription fee in full before the deadline date

Deadline to register: January 11th, 2002

For more information, contact: Jean-Baptiste Loon, Recreation Coordinator
Gordon Brien, Recreation Assistant
Tel: (418) 923-3461 ext. 322 or 246
Fax: (418) 923-3115 or 2112



Chisasibi Christmas Miracle

George Bearskin thought he had a bit of good luck when he spotted a caribou crossing the road Dec. 3. He was driving a grader on a lonely stretch of road at kilometre 342 near LG-4 and pulled over to the side. "I saw the caribou in the treeline and I shot it," he said. After seeing the caribou go down he went back to the truck because he had left his knife in his lunchbox.

Returning to the caribou he turned it over and went to work getting the hide off. "As I was cutting the chest and got to the stomach my knife popped out," he recounted. He cut himself about an inch above his thumb, severing an artery. "There was a geyser of blood," Bearskin remembers. "I tried to stop the bleeding by pressing my hand on it. It didn't stop."

Bearskin stood there for a "couple of minutes' wondering what to do and started back to the road. Two vehicles went by without stopping and then two police came by. Looking at Bearskin the police weren't worried at first but decided to stop to check things out. They saw all the blood. Bearskin remembers the police being more worried than he was at that point, "because they knew how serious it was."

The two SQ officers, Louis Nault and Marc Filion of the Radission detachment, were actually on their way to the airport as they were scheduled to fly out that day. They put an emergency bandage on the wound but the bleeding wouldn't stop. Bearskin said the trip took about 20 minutes to travel the roughly 40 kilometres to LG-4's nursing clinic.

"When we got there we had to find the clinic," said Bearskin. "We were running around and as we got to the corridor where the clinic was my legs started to get shakey." Bearskin said the corridor started to spin and he hit the floor gasping for air. The next thing he knew was the nurse was giving him a needle and slapping his face to keep him awake. Bearskin had fainted and was going into shock. A helicopter was called to medivac him to the Chisasibi hospital. Bearskin said he was still bleeding at this point.

He arrived in Chisasibi around 1:15 p.m. Two doctors working on him phoned a specialist in Amos who told them what to do. They pinched the vein at either end and the bleeding stopped.

"A little farther off the road and I wouldn't be here," Bearskin said. "I was very lucky. If the police hadn't stopped who knows how long it would have been until the next vehicle and I would have passed out trying to make it to LG-4." Bearskin said his family was very happy with the outcome and they think it was a miracle he is alive.

Bearskin ended his tale with a seasonal greeting: "I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and I want to remind everyone to be careful over the holidays."

by Will Nicholls

Not the Nation

by Neil Diamond

There are now three "newspapers" serving the Cree nation.

The Grand Council of the Crees have launched a publication they can call their own. Eeyou Eenou Nation was released at the Council/Board meeting in Montreal on Decber 20th. The entire issue is devoted to the Agreement in Principle.

Their first issue has an interview with Grand Chief Ted Moses and an excerpt of a letter from Billy Diamond to the Nation.

There was some confusion at the Grand Council office about the new magazine when someone asked the editor about the "facelift" of the Nation.

"I felt like they're trying to cash in on our years of hard work and reputation when one of the chiefs asked me where he could get a copy," said Editor in Chief of the Nation William Nicholls, "He seemed to think it was our work and that could be a problem."

The magazine hails itself as "The Voice of the People" and is styled as a newsmagazine with interviews, photos and news type pieces on the major pro-agreement players in the Cree world following the October 23 signing of the Agreement in Principle.

Beat the rush for it and pick it up at your local band office.

CREE NATION INVITATIONAL

HOCKEY
BROOMBALL
TOURNAMENT

The Directors, assistant-directors, co-ordinator and all ***those involved*** *in organizing the 20th Edition of the* ***C.N.I.T.*** ***Hockey and Broomball Tournament,*** *which was held in* ***Val-d'Or*** *from December 6 to 9, 2001, would like to* ***thank*** *their* ***sponsors*** *for their* ***continued support.***

CNIT

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We hope to continue counting on your support for the upcoming C.N.I.T. minor to be held in March of 2002.

Thanks to all the players and fans who attended this year's event.

Merry Christmas to all and ***Happy New Year!***

John Boudrias, Co-ordinator: (819) 825-2648

Office closed from December 15 to January 21.
Please call Matt Blacksmith at (819) 753-2450 ext.22
for any urgent matters or leave message on C.N.I.T. voicemail.

CNIT Hockey and Broomball Final Results

Class A Hockey
Final Game Mistissini Trappers 4, Mistissini Rockets 3 (O.T.)
Champions Mistissini Trappers
Finalists Mistissini Rockets
Consolation Champions Waswanipi Chiefs
Consolation Finalistis Waskaganish Wings
M.V.P. Titus Metabie
Best Offensive Player Ernie Trapper
Best Defensive Player Clifford Benac
Top Scorer Titus Metabie

Class B Hockey
Final Game Waskaganish Eagles 11, Washaw Sibi 3
Champions Waskaganish Eagles
Finalists Washaw Sibi (Amos)
Consolation Champions Wemindji Slyfoxes
Consolation Finalists Chisasibi Warriors
M.V.P. Derek Jonah
Best Offensive Player Kevin Hester
Best Defensive Player George Salt
Top Scorer Rodney Hester

Class C Hockey
Final Game Waskaganish Ex-Wings 8, Winneway Warriors 2
Champions Waskaganish Ex-Wings
Finalisits Winneway Warriors
Consolation Champions Wemindji Moose
Consolation Finalists Waswanipi Grand Chiefs
M.V.P. Raymond Hester
Best Offensive Player Charles Katapatuk
Best Defensive Player Gordon Moar
Top Scorer Frank Atsynia

Oldtimer Hockey
Final Game Waskaganish Big Chiefs 2, Moosenee Bombardiers
Champions Waskaganish Big Chiefs
Finalists Moosenee Bombardiers
Consolation Champions Mistissini Rusty Blades
Consolation Finalists Lac Simon Old Buck Moose
M.V.P. Jim Hester
Best Offensive Player Robert Whiskeychan
Best Defensive Player Tom Miller
Top Scorer Norman Blacksmith

Women's Hockey
Final Game Waskaganish 3, Mistissini 1
Champions Waskaganish
Finalists Mistissini
Consolation Champions Chisasibi Wildcats
Consolation Finalists Nemaska
M.V.P. Wany Mowatt
Best Defensive Player Evadney Matoush
Best Offensive Player Wany Mowatt
Top Scorer Tiffany Neeposh 1

CORRECTION
Artwork by Peter Pelchat accompanied the legend "The Old Woman and Her Grandson" in Vol.9, No.2. This illustration was wrongly attributed to Tim Whiskeychan. We apologize for the error and any confusion it may have caused.

Class I Broomball
Final Game Waskaganish Starlites 2, Waswanipi 1
Champions Waskaganish Starlites
Finalists Waswanipi Northern Stars
Consolation Champions Chisasibi North Stars
Consolation Finalists Wemindji Wolverines
M.V.P. Cynthia Salt
Best Offensive Player Bessie Stephen
Best Defensive Player Rebecca Cowboy
Top Scorer Micheline Saganash

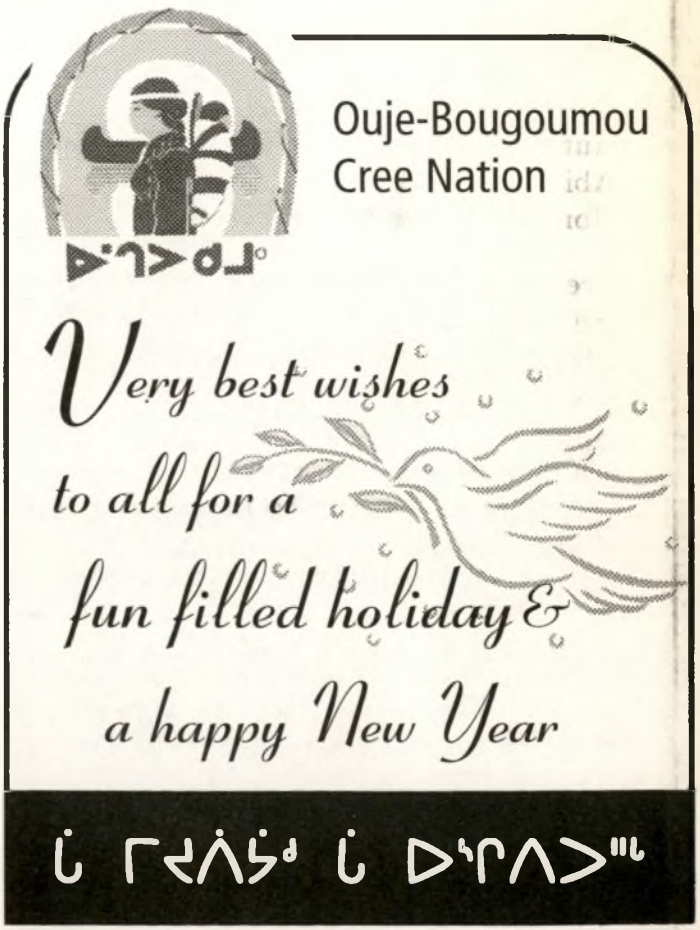
Class B Broomball
Final Game Chisasibi Stars 2, Mistissini Shooting Stars 0
Champions Chisasibi Stars
Finalists Mistissini Shooting Stars
Consolation Champions Waskaganish Northern Lites
Consolation Finalists Lac Simon Nightwolves
M.V.P. Dinah Chiskamish
Best Offensive Player Marilyn Blackned
Best Defensive Player Catherine Wash
Top Scorer Tiffany Neeposh

AIP Quick Facts

Deadline for communities to oppose or support the AIP is January 31st and if approved it will be signed on February 7.

Waswanipi wants the area protected from logging to be at least 8 per cent as it is the international standard.

The final text was supposed to be ready on December 20 but wasn't.



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The Woman Who Married Her Dog

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ᐃᖃᓗᐊᓂ, ᓇᖃᐅᖅ ᒥᓄ ᐊᒍ ᑕᓵᔪᑦ. ᑕᕆ ᓂᑭᖅᑎᓵᒪᓵᖅ ᐃ ᐅᖅᑕᐃᓪ. ᓇᕆᓂ ᑭᖏ ᐊᓇ ᔪᐱᓪ ᐅᖅᑭ ᐃᐅᑦ. ᒥᓄ ᐊᓂᑕ ᐊ ᐃᑎᒪᓪ ᐊᑦᐊᓵᖅ ᐊᓂᑕ ᐊ ᒪᒥᖅᑎᑎᓇᓚᓵᔪᓪ. ᐊᔪᑕ ᐊᓂᑕ ᑭ ᐃᖅᑕᑎ ᐊᓐ ᐃᖃᓗᐊᓂ. ᐊᑎ ᐃ ᐃᑎᒥᔪᑎ ᐊᓂᔪᖅ ᓇᕆᓂ", ᐊᓂᔪᓵᖅ ᐊᓇ ᐊᐅᑦᓕ". ᓇᖅᓪ ᓂᒥ ᓂ"ᐊᑦᓕᑎᒧᑎ ᐊᓂᔪᓵᖅ ᐊᑦᐃ ᐃᑎᒥᔪᑦ. ᓂᒧᐃ ᑭᕆ ᑭᖏ ᐊᑦᐊᓵᖅ" ᔪᔪᖅᒥᔪᑎ. ᑭᕆ ᒥᓄ ᐃᓕ ᓇᖅᓪ ᓂᒥ ᓂ"ᐊᑦᓕᑎᒧᑎ ᐊᑦᐃ ᐃᑎᒥᔪᑦ ᐊᓂᔪᖅ" ᓇᕆᓂ". ᑕᕆ ᑭᖏ ᐊᓇ ᓇᖅᓪ ᑎ ᕆᑎ ᑭᖅᑎᓵᒥᒥ"ᐃᓪᔪᑦ ᐊᑎᖅ ᐅᑎ ᑲᑎᑦ ᐃᖅᑕᐅᑎ. ᐃᖅᑕ ᐊᐅᓄ ᐊᔪᑦ ᐊᔪᖅ ᒥᐱ" ᒥᓵᓂ ᓂᑭᖅᑎᓵᒪᓵᖅ ᐅᑭ ᐃᓕᓴᐅᑦ, ᐃᖅᑕᐅᓪᑎᑦ. ᐊᑐᑦ ᓗᑎ ᓇᖅᓪ ᓂᒥ ᓂ"ᐊᑦᓕᑎᒧᑎ ᐊᑦᐃ ᐃᑎᒥᔪᑦ ᐊᓂᔪᓵᖅ ᐊᓇ ᐃᑎᒥᔪᑦ. ᑕᕆ ᑭᖏ ᐊᓇ ᐃᑎᒥᔪᑦ ᐊᓂᔪᓵᖅ ᐊᑦᐃ ᐃᑎᒥᔪᑦ ᐊᓂᔪᓵᖅ" ᓇᕆᓂ". ᑕᕆ ᑭᖏ ᐊᓇ ᓇᖅᓪ ᓂᒥ ᓂ"ᐊᑦᓕᑎᒧᑎ ᐊᑦᐃ ᐃᑎᒥᔪᑦ ᐊᓂᔪᓵᖅ" ᓇᕆᓂ". ᑕᕆ ᑭᖏ ᐊᓇ ᓇᖅᓪ ᑎ ᕆᑎ ᑭᖅᑎᓵᒪᓵᖅ

ᑲᔪᓇᔨᓂᖅ ᐊᓂᔅ ᐃᑎᕐᔅ. ᓇᖅ ᐊ ᑭᑕᑲᖅᑕᓪᓗᒃ ᐊᓂᔅ" ᑕᒥᑎᕐᔅ", ᒥᔪᐊ ᑭᓪᓚ ᐊᓂᔅ ᑲᑲᕐ. ᑕᓪᓚ ᐊᐃᕐᔅ" ᐊᐱᒋᒪᓂ, ᐊᓂᑕ ᓇᓪᓂ" ᑲᖅᓴᖅ ᐊᓂᑦ. ᒥᓂ ᐊᓂᔅ" ᐊᑎᒃᓗ ᓇᖅᓗ ᐊ ᐃᓂᓯᑭᒥᓗᒃ" ᐊᓂᑦ ᐃᑎᐊᓂ. ᐊ ᐊᔪᒥᔨᑦ ᑭᓪᓚ. ᑕᓪᓚ ᓂᑲᖅᑲᒪᓂ ᓇᖅᓗ ᐊ ᐊᔨᒥ"ᐃᔨᑲᑦ. ᑲᑎᓪᓗᒃ, ᓄᓇ ᓂᓪᓴ ᑕᑎ. ᐊᔨᓵᑲᑲ ᓄᓇ ᑭᐃᓴ. ᐊᓂ ᑕᔅ ᑲᓂ ᐊᑎ ᑕᑦᑐᓂᔨᓂ, ᑲᓂ ᐃᓕᓴᕐᓂᖅ ᐊᐃᓕᓴᕐᓂᖅ ᐊᑎᒃᓗ ᐃᓚᐅᑎᓪᓗᒍ, ᑲᓂ ᐱᔪᓐᓇᖅᑐᖅ ᐊᑎᒃᓗ ᐊᑎᓂᖅ. ᐊᔨᓵᑲᑲ ᓄᓇ ᑭᐃᓴ. ᐊᓂ ᑕᔅ ᑲᓂ ᐊᑎ ᐊᔨᒥ"ᐃᔨᑲᑦ ᑕᒥᑎᕐᔅ", ᑲᓂ ᐊᑎᒃᓗ ᐊᓂᑦ ᐊᑎᒃᓗ ᐊᑎᓂᖅ.

ᐅᐱᵒ, ᑭᖅ ᐅᖅ ᐊᓂᒪᒃ ᐅᑕᓂᖏᑦ ᑲ ᓂᐱᖏᐊᓯᐊᓗᓐ. ᐊᑯ ᐅᖅ ᐊ ᐃᔪᓂᒃᓴᐅᖅ, ᑲᑕᔪᖅ ᑭᓪᓚᒃ ᐊᑎ ᔦᓂᐊᖏᐅᖅ. ᒥᑯ ᒃᖅ ᑕᓪᓚ ᓂᑎᑕᔪᒃᓯᐅ ᖅ ᐊᔪᓂᐊᖏᐅᖅ. ᒥᖏᓐᐊ ᐊᖏ ᑕᓪᓚ ᒥᓄ ᕿᐱᖏᑕᐅ. ᑲᓐᑦᑐᖅ, ᒥᖏᓐᐊ ᐊᓂ ᑕᓪᓚᒃᓴᐅᖅ. ᓇᑎᐊᐱᖏᑎᒍᒃ ᐊᓂᔾ" ᑲᑲᔾ ᑲ ᑭᖏᓐᓂᒃᑯᑦ". ᓇᑎᐊᐱᖏᑎᒍᒃ. ᐃᔾᐱᖏᑎᒍᒃ. ᐊᖏ ᒥᔪᐊᐊ ᐊᓂ ᐊᑎᖏᐊᐱᖏᑎᒍᒃ ᐊᑎᖅ ᑲ ᐃᖏᑎᑎ, ᒥᔪᐊᐊ ᐊᓂᑦ ᐃᓐᑲᐊᓂᖅ ᑭᓚᐃᔾᓴ ᐅᒥᒃᓴ ᑲ ᒥᔾᑲᓂᖅ, ᑭᖅ ᐃᓐᑲᐅ ᒥᖏᓐᐅᓂᐅ ᒥᒃ", ᑭᖅ ᐊᓂᖅ ᐃᓐᑲᐅ ᐅᒥᑕᓂᖅ ᒥᒃ". ᒥᔪᐊᐊ ᐊᓂᖅ ᐃᓐᑲᐅ ᐊᓂᖅ ᐃᓐᑲᐅ ᐅᒥᑕᓂᖅ ᒥᒃ. ᑭᖅ ᐃᓐᑲᐅ ᐊᓂᖅ ᒥᒃ ᐃᓐᑲᐅᓐᓂᒃᑯᑦ

The Story of Cochiti Lake

by Donald Nicholls

Cochiti Lake is located on the Cochiti Pueblo Reservation between Alberquerque, Santa Fe and Los Alamos, New Mexico. The reservoir is heralded as the tenth largest man-made lake in the world. While attending the Building Native Nations: Environment, Natural Resources and Governance Conference last week, I had the privilege of hearing the tale of how it came to be from the Governor of the Cochiti Pueblo people, Regis Pecos.

The Pueblo are American Indians that the government described in the 1800s as "peaceful, industrious, intelligent, honest and virtuous people." Regis Pecos tells of how 400 years ago his people adopted Catholicism as a way of preserving their own religion and beliefs inside a familiar structure to the non-Indians. He talks of how they adopted white forms of government and judiciary but still retained their traditional ways of deciding issues and using peace-making to repair wrongs.

In the 1950s the government came onto their reservation to construct a large reservoir. The Pueblo Elders went to the site and pleaded with the engineers to leave just one area untouched as it was the oldest and most sacred site of the Pueblo culture and people. They left the site with promises and reassurances that it would be preserved. It was the first place to be dynamited. Indian tribes from across the state wept at the news of the loss and desecration of this sacred site, which represented a link with their Creator, land and culture. It would not be until years later they would learn from government documents that this reservoir was created to be a posh recreation lake for upper class families from Santa Fe, Alberquerque and Los Alamos. The promises made to their Elders were never intended to be kept.

This would mark the beginning of their struggles. It was soon afterward that developers visited their land to push for economic development. Regis talks of how as a young man he would sit in council and watch developers come to some of his Elders, pat them on the back and tell them they were good men they could rely on. How even though it was against their culture and traditions, those leaders understood how they needed fast decisions as that is the way business is done. The next thing they knew a town of 40,000 was being built on their reservation next to their community. It was to be a retirement town for wealthy people of New Mexico.

The Pueblos banded together to form a Development Corporation to pool their resources to buy up leases to their own land. They launched a class action suit against the advertising campaign that sought to sell off most of their land to outsiders. They were fortunate enough to convince a judge in Texas that they should have the right to buy the 99-year leases to their own land first. Through this effort, they have now reduced the size of the town to small community encompassing only 600 acres. The proposed town would have surely absorbed their communities and destroyed their culture.

vices – their memories would preserve the significance of the occasion in accordance with the traditions of an oral culture.

What lays ahead in the future of the Cochiti Pueblo people? The leaders have decided that if they do not articulate a vision for their nation over the next hundred years, they face the danger of losing parts of their culture and heritage. Therefore they set up a survey of questions for their people to answer: 1) What do you want for our nation over the next 100 years? 2) What do you see happening in the communities? 3) What kind of caretakers are our children to become? 4) What responsibility are you willing to accept to accomplish questions 1 – 3?

This was not the end of their struggles. The city of Los Alamos decided they would build a dam on the reservoir over the area that had been desecrated decades earlier by the government. Once again their beliefs and culture would be violated in the name of development. The Pueblo people managed to secure a closed-door judicial hearing to try to stop the construction of this dam. The challenge was that secrecy is of paramount importance to Pueblo beliefs and religion. Any of their tribe that testified would face banishment from their society. The Elders were gathered together and met in council for days. Who among them would sacrifice their culture, identity and way of life? After many tears and antagonizing deliberations, the Elders emerged to say they would not sacrifice one of their own and violate their duty to keep the ancient beliefs, knowledge and traditions of the Pueblo secret. This unholy affront to their people would proceed.

It was at this lowest of moments that a light appeared, Congressman Bill Richardson heard of their plight and dilemma and started working in Congress to get a bill passed to stop this work and prevent any future development on their land. The Pueblos and Congressman Richardson worked together to defeat the proposed dam project and went on to lower the level of the reservoir and restore 25,000 acres of land to the reserve.

The Army Corps of Engineers recently apologized at a public ceremony to the Pueblo nation on the site they had desecrated. The government requested permission to bring cameras and other devices to record this historic moment, the Pueblo said no they would bring their own. To the surprise of the visitors, **the Pueblo brought their elementary school classes to be the recording de-**

A lesson for all of society to take from the Pueblo is that in deciding their future for the next 100 years, they surveyed all ages of Pueblos from children to Elders. They were rewarded with a pleasant surprise – the visions of the future for the youth and Elders were remarkably similar. Both wanted a safe community, a community where people interacted more, one that was free of drug and alcohol problems, a community free of violence, a tribal form of governance reestablished in the community, a return to a more traditional way of life where the culture was more respected and promoted and, finally, a vision that sought to preserve the beauty of their land and to protect their reservation.

Another unique characteristic of the Cochiti Pueblo is that they believe in making major decisions by consensus as it is the oldest and most respectful form of traditional decision-making. Although the process is exhaustive, it is includes everyone's perspectives. Perhaps this responsible form of governance is what led to the use of referendums. A concern of referendums has been the circulation of information before the voting stage; however, with the size of Aboriginal nations and the increased use of community consultations the widespread dissemination of information can be accomplished with minimal effort.

Governor Regis Pecos of the Cochiti Pueblo sums up their struggles as the determination of the Pueblo not to compromise their way of life - "it is the typical David and Goliath story and we will gladly embrace the role of David any day."

CREEACTIONS

Grandmother's River

My dear grandchildren, hardly a day goes by when I don't think of you. Your laughter floats up the hill from the river bed and through my window. Your cries of joy fly up here like the first chirps of the birds in the morning after a rain.

From my window I watch you play and splash about in the water and puddles. My heart leaps and bounds every time I see you care for each other. I long to be down by the river with you, to play in the warm grass with my legs over the river bank and my toes in the water.

It makes me so happy that you take time out from your play to visit me here, in my bedroom. My legs cannot carry me anymore. Your mothers have been very patient with me. It is good to see that you listen well to the stories and legends that I tell you of our peoples. The life that we used to live before the settlers and ranchers took over our land.

We have a sacred connection with our cousins, the animals. But the thread that connects us with nature is frayed. If a few more strands are broken, we will lose all that is left of our identity, our closeness with nature, in the way of the animals. You see...it was the animals who gave their lives to us, so that we could survive. We are not properly equipped, like the animals, to live in nature without tools, fire, and clothing. Animals have those things already given to them. They do not have to move them around like we do when we move from place to place. It is this way that they are stronger than us, yet they give themselves to us.

Now...there are people on this earth who do not respect this strength of the animals. They like to control the environment. They like to kill more than they need. They don't mind destroying the land that nature's animals live on. They even kill nature's animals , and their own animals take over. Their animals are lazy and take up too much space.

I have seen these things, when I could still get about. Now my memory takes me to these places. My dreams tell me that these people have already taken much more land. The land is crying out for relief. She no longer endures the torment these people put her through. She shakes, blows, erupts her tears, and blood pours out of her.

Many species no longer inhabit this earth. Much of the earth is uninhabitable. Because of this, Mother Nature comes to me in my dreams and asks me to tell you to be careful that you don't fall into the arms of destruction. Don't become cold, and no longer care for the river that you now play beside. It is one of the last rivers on this Turtle Island that is not polluted. Too many of those people like to control rivers and divert their currents. Industrial plants that spew out garbage are built along rivers. Towering smoke stacks continuously pollute the air, and the pollution falls onto the earth and into the water. Animals cannot breathe. Their food is contaminated and their babies are born with deformities. They are even born dead.

So, my little grandchildren, remember this delicate thread that we hold on so dear. Be careful not to break any more strands. Try to protect the strands that remain. Maybe you can find ways to weave a new thread. Do not become disillusioned by money. There is good money, and there is bad money. It is the bad money that severs the thread.

Margret Orr

Agreement In Principle (Another Challenge for Eeyou)

I am very concerned about what the A.I.P. has created among our people as Eeyou. The values which we hold as part of being Eeyou are now being tested to a point where we can now wonder whether or not these values were used in the development of the process and also the disregard of the interest and future of our children.

Honesty, respect and sharing — to mention only a few — are specific values not being used or understood in the development or used in the working process for Eeyou at this point in time.

Our Elders and way of life has become old news and have become less important in the unguided and dangerous path we walk on today.

The elders are one important key to our survival and they have always taught us to listen to Eeyou for the language of our elders cany that knowledge and history of who we are as a people. We have to bring this life back to the people to be respected and honoured, only at this time by knowing our history, our language and the true meaning of the land can we become truly connected once again as Eeyou of Eeyou Estchee. With no guidance, these times begin to create havoc within the lives and for the lives of children yet to come. A shadow of doubt comes over our people as all types of controversy begin to come into play.

The direction our leadership has chosen is now being questioned by the people of Eeyou Estchee, A leadership review should now be an important issue for our people to consider. The criteria in order for a person to be qualified to become a leader for our people should be now brought before our people.

Throughout history we have shown that Eeyou are a strong people. We have shown this in the survival of our culture, language and traditions. This alone can show the world the strength and will of our people as Eeyou, and we can become a much stronger force as a nation, but to accomplish this we must move together in one common direction.

At this point in time, we are being challenged with our future at stake, and the future of our children which has been put on the table to be bargained with in the present agreement in principle.

Like the past agreement in 1975, which has never worked from day one, now we blindly consider to enter into another binding document with the Quebec government.

The A.I.P. now being forced on our people should never be signed, because first of all it is the Government's idea being forced on Eeyou by their own people, and secondly, we still don't understand the full capacity of what was written and contained within the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

In 1975 we chose to give up our rights not understanding exactly what that meant and we have become whatever the dominant society has to told us to be.

They have told us that we can hunt, fish, and trap not because

we are Eeyou but because they give us the right, and we must hunt, fish and trap by their regulations.

They have left us 1% of traditional land and taken 99% to develop as they wish. We have not yet understood the full impact of the devastating experience that was carried out on our people since contact of the Western world.

The negative forces of which I talk are the soul wounds of our people. Since contact we have suffered from diseases unknown to our people. The forced education of our fathers and mothers left unhealed scars. The removal of children from their parents broke a bond that pains our people to this day. The relocations forced on our people damaged our spirits.

The teachings of our language and culture through the knowledge of our elders will explain what has happened to the spirit of our people.

The clear cutting of our forests and the flooding of our territories has damaged the spirit of our people and without the acknowledgement of this action and without finding a way for the people to remedy the process and become strong again we will be moving in a direction without any guidance from who we are as a people.

We need to heal and grow from our past. Before moving forward and understanding the future.

I speak of our leadership and what now needs to become a reality. The leadership must be taught and know the people before any person can speak and before any person can accept a position as a leader for our people. The leader must know the history carried within our language and the importance of the language itself because the language carries who and what we are as Eeyou.

The leadership must first know themselves from the heart and they must also know and listen to the needs of Eeyou. The leadership must know our creation story, our legends and most importantly our leadership must know what the land means to Eeyou and what we as Eeyou mean to the land.

Our leadership for Eeyou can be understood within the voice of one of our elders in which he stated:

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Eeyou must take that step."

The truth of Eeyou's customs, traditions and culture, when known and respected, will set the spirit free. To reach this freedom, Eeyou has to study and know the history, the way of life honoured and practiced, as well as the special significant and meaningful ceremonies of Eeyou. The structure of Eeyou community and the respect manifested by Eeyou to peoples, land and the Creator.

Recently Eeyou have walked on a new road foreign to its people. They begin to follow the dictation of the ways of another society, which absorbed their concern and worries about that society's way. This assimilated them into schools of thought of that society. In the process Eeyou began to lose their understanding of the true meaning and practices of its ceremonies, culture and traditions. Over time, the Eeyou way of life, language and culture has been eroded. Eeyou elders are the guardians of its peoples' history, culture and language. They are the teachers of a way of life which is inherited from generation to generation. The foundation and wisdom of Eeyou lies within the heart and soul of it's people and the Eeyou elders are the pillars of that foundation and wisdom. They are the bearers of torches to pass to future Eeyou generations.

The voice of Eeyou Elders must be heard, understood and respected. They are telling Eeyou to understand, accept and practice Eeyou culture, tradition and language. This is where Eeyou will find strength and guidance. The true meaning of Eeyou communities must be known, practiced and respected as this is the plan of Eeyou laws and Eeyou Society. Eeyou must relate their way of life. It is the way of assuring Eeyou way of life survives and continues. This will govern Eeyou into the future. The legends of Eeyou are fulfilled as time passes and when an Eeyou youth begins to learn the path of Eeyou destiny with an Eeyou elder as his guide and teacher, the Eeyou legend comes to life. The Eeyou youth will be the strength and future of the Eeyou. They must be taught Eeyou language, culture, traditions and history of Eeyou. These must be sacred to them.

Our leadership have to know what this means before accepting or becoming a leader for Eeyou.

Yours in Brotherhood,

Eric R. House

Film Maker concerned

Ed. Note: The following is a story from the Indiginous Times *that reflects on how some First Nations are looking at the AIP. It was forwarded to us by Danny Beaton, who requested that it be reprinted to reflect his viewpoints on the AIP and what it can mean.*

Danny Beaton remembers what it was like. Addicted to drugs and alcohol, disconnected from his language and culture, his roots and his heritage.

A lot has changed since he last picked up a drink 12 years ago. Today Beaton works with the Elders in an attempt to ensure that no one loses their way from their culture, and that goes not only for individuals, but for society as a whole.

Beaton is a Mohawk from the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario. He is also a documentary filmmaker. His films seek to capture the words and the wisdom of the Elders, whom he fears are not paid the heed they so rightly deserve. Through his films, he says that what the Elders offer should be paramount to all parts of life, including education, culture, faith and politics.

That's why he is so concerned with the recent deal between the James Bay Crees and the Province of Quebec. In late October, Quebec Premier Bernard Landry and Grand Chief Dr. Ted Moses signed a massive deal to develop the north, a deal Beaton says that will ruin the traditional way of life for the region's Cree people.

"What Dr. Ted Moses has done has been to bring cultural genocide upon his people," said Beaton in a recent phone interview. "What people there have to remember, is that many people still live their traditional ways of life, hunting, trapping, fishing – they don't want those slabs of concrete, they don't want those roads plowing through mother earth up there, they don't realize what this will do to the ecology, the environment, the wildlife, a whole way of life will come to an end, and it's a disgrace."

On October 24, Quebec's Crees agreed to what Premier Bernard Landry called a "nation-to-nation" agreement. Under terms of the agreement, the province will provide at least $3.5 billion over the next 50 years to the Crees in exchange for their consent to a major hydro-electric project and the abandonment of several Cree-initiated lawsuits against the province.

"By this agreement, we stand with Quebec," Ted Moses, the James Bay Cree Grand Chief, said during a signing ceremony in Quebec City. "We share the intention to develop this land in a way which is respectful of its vital importance to our survival and mindful that both Crees and Quebecers must have the means to create a common future of prosperity."

Beaton calls this an outrage and one of the most shameful things a First Nations leader has ever done to his own people.

"This is what (National Chief) Matthew Coon Come has worked his whole political career to prevent, the destruction of

a way of life. And they did this at what price? Mr.Landry said the agreement is a 'great peace' between Quebec and the Crees, in reference to the 1701 Great Peace Treaty between the French and Iroquoi leaders, which allowed for the settlement of New France."

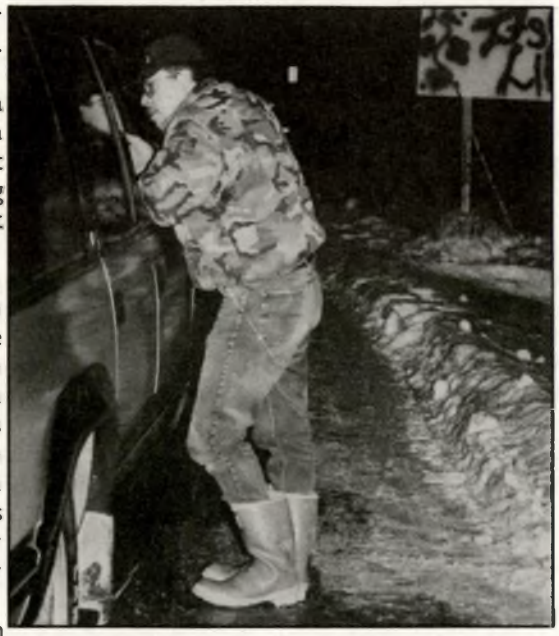
Matthew Coon Come during the 1990s as Cree Grand Chief, accused the Quebec government of practising "cultural genocide" on his people and became a hero among Canada's First Nations for his efforts.

Dr. Moses said that one of the reasons he agreed to this massive deal was the recent terrorist attacks in Washington, D.C. and New York City.

"That day, people throughout North America realized how small the world is and how important it is to resolve issues rather than to let them divide us."

Beaton and other critics wonder aloud about the consultation process, and the sudden reversal of policy. At present there is no mechanism which allows the deal to be ratified by the Cree people, and many Cree leaders are unsure if they have enough support to allow this to go ahead. Former Cree Grand Chief Billy Diamond, who helped negotiate the 1975 James Bay agreement, said he expects trouble ahead.

"There will be fallout from this process," Diamond said. "There are many people who will not be happy that this has happened. I fear infighting like we have not seen before. The stakes are high."



The major event will bring about a diversion of the Rupert River in a proposed $3.8 billion, 1,200-megawatt hydro-electric project. The resulting disturbance in the environment is what has many observers up in arms.

"Our sacred duty as First Nations people is to protect the earth," Beaton said. "This deal is no different than the devastation that was caused by the terrorist attacks in New York. It is just a different kind of bomb. It plants the seeds of destruction for our people, because this kind of closed-door deal sets a precedent for other political leaders across the country, where money becomes more important that our way of life."

The $3.5-billion will be disbursed in $70-million annual instalments over 50 years. The money will be administered by a new Cree economic development agency. The agreement is also intended to provide the Cree with greater control over logging, hunting and trapping on traditional territory.

Beaton counters that this deal will have the exact opposite effect. "What this will do is to destroy the habitat," he said. "And we will be doing this to our own communities, our own lands. We are connected to the land, it is the base of our way of life and our culture. Matthew Coon Come couldn't have known about this, I don't think anyone knew about this until it was a done deal."

A spokesperson for Matthew Coon Come could not be reached for comment.

"Our elders warned about this," Beaton added. "They remind us that it is our responsibility to care for the land. And this deal will not do that," says Beaton. "We need to raise awareness of this issue."

WHOOOOOAAAA!!!. WHOA!, WHOA!. WHOA!

First of all, I would like to express my full support to those who have spoken against the AIP.

Matthew Mukash, Josie Jimiken, Ashley Iserhoff and all the others who have. Your strength, your fearlessness, your faith in yourself and others and your faith in the creator and our mother earth really shows that you care and you do know where you come from. This has really helped me to have faith in my strengths and in my beliefs. Our care for Tsey- Manitou and mother earth is our strength as it has been from the beginning of our time. Meegweetch fellow supporters.

I strongly believe or should I say I know that this a form of colonization on behalf of the governments. They are using the oldest and almost invisible form of warfare used to colonize territories that are already inhabited, and that's to weaken, divide, then conquer. Psychological warfare.

When we fought the Great Whale project we were really creating waves for Hydro Quebec and the Quebec government. We were becoming very strong. Their name was really being crushed globally, so they backed off before their name got worse. They put Great Whale on ice. There was a plan behind it. THE PLAN— Let's put our guns down for now go back behind our battle lines and fight from a different angle. Let's slowly cut off their funds, put them in a desperate situation. We will make them spend all their funding in court, we will stop giving them contracts (Cree Construction), and so on, until they realize their money is running short. They need this money to run their schools, their clinics and their hospitals and so on, this will leave them with no choice but to give in into signing another agreement. So here they are knocking on our door, the big bad wolf, but this time he has a sheep skin on, looking friendly and harmless. They couldn't blow our house down when we fought the Great Whale project. So they have to put on a sheep skin to fool us. If we sign the agreement, we will only be opening the door to the big bad wolf. Then when he comes in he will remove his sheep skin and gobble us all up. That's the moral of the three little pigs story. But in the story there was one little pig who was smarter and stronger then the other two, he didn't open that door. He was fearless. I know I don't have proof of all this, (the plan) but it is very, very possible that this is true. And they couldn't have picked a better time to present the AIP, after what happened on September 11. Playing on the emotions of others.

Our Mother.— Our mother is a person who not only carried us in her belly for 9 months she also gave birth to us, fed us, held us, raised us, taught us right from wrong, she showed us unconditional love and so on. In return we showed our respect towards her, our love for her, our appreciation of her. Imagine if, after all she had done for us, we turn around and steal her special personal belongings and sell them for our own personal gain. This is very, very disrespectful. It is wrong. Is this what we do in return? Is this the thanks we show her? No it is not. We have to care and love her in the same way she did for us! This is exactly what we have to do for our mother earth, the mother of all loving mothers. If the AIP goes through, then we will only

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be stealing from her for our own personal gain. How disrespectful.

Whenever you pass the Ruperts River on the James Bay highway, stop and make an offering if you feel like it, take a good look and listen, close your eyes and feel, feel what your heart is telling you, and ask the Ruperts... do we really need to stop you, in order for us to prosper on this earth? She will give you the answer. Remember, and we are told this over and over to trust our hearts. Our heart always knows the answer. Example; Let's say we're about to do a break and entry, naturally or normally we feel really scared about what we're about to do, because we're afraid we're going to get caught because we know it's wrong. You're faced with bully friends who call you chicken or they threaten to beat you up if you don't go along with their game, so you go along with the B&E, your inside still feeling scared, you end up getting caught, you end up in trouble. You're banging your head in a cell asking yourself, why? why did I do it? I know why you did it. Its simple, you didn't trust your heart, instead you followed exterior direction (the bullies). That scared feeling you felt in your heart was telling you that it is wrong what your about to do. So trust your heart it will lead in the right direction, do not let external issues confuse you. You will get lost. Your heart is like the northern star, it forever remains in one place. The other stars are like your brain, forever moving around. That's why they say "if your lost find the northern star, it will guide you in the right direction." Our heart is eternal. Our heart is our spirit. You can be brain dead but still alive as long as your spirit still remains in your body. It cannot be the other way around. As soon as your spirit is gone your brain dies immediately.

"Nobody lives on the land anymore." This may be true that many people do not live out on the land. There is a reason for this though. If we were all living on the land , then it would be easier for the governments to take over. The people who are living out on the land that I strongly respect and admire, have their special roles, they are the front line caretakers of not only the land but also our culture. The people who live in the villages also play a special role and this is to protect the land on the frontlines of the battle. So you can say that we who live most of our time in the villages are still living on the land, maybe not OUT on the land but ON the land. Remember living on the land doesn't only mean that you have to hunt and kill animals, killing animals was neccessary in order for us to survive. It's our respect for our mother earth and the creator who is the provider of all, that comes first, because without them(creator, mother earth) there would be no animals, in fact, even WE wouldn't exist. You can thank and respect the creator and our mother earth anywhere on this earth. And to me this is the core of our culture..

What about our youth? Well when I was young, before the signing of the first agreement, I remember the old wood stoves, the old oil lamps, the full pot of tea, the bowl of bannock, on the table, a tray full of jams, peanut butter, sugar, butter, and more banock, Cree and Inuit bannock just ready to be eaten by the many grandchildren that would stop to visit. It was a house so full of spirit with grandparents so full of love. We had bird hunting, lots of it, no TV, sliding, bicycle that we would ride through the winding trails, we were able to swim anywhere in the river, fishing for suckers and white fish right from the shores of the river with our special recipe of flour dough for bait, and many of friends that we would walk up and down with throughout the evenings on "the main road" We had many things to do and it was so much fun. We were independent, this gave us spirit. I know we are not back in those days, but damn! did we have spirit!!!. Lots of it!!!. When we heard about the signing of the first agreement, we had no idea what they were talking about, we just went right back to bird hunting and fishing. But when we heard about the arenas, bowling alleys, swimming pools, running water, electricity, shopping center, a school with a gigantic gymnasium, this got our attention and boy were we excited. Even the move from the island to Chisasibi itself was exciting. One thing we didn't know though was that we were leaving that spirit behind. We got the things we were promised (except for the pool), but something happened. All of a sudden there was this feeling like a big a hole inside us, and we didn't know what was supposed to fill it. It was like we didn't know what to do anymore. Although we had arenas and stuff, still it couldn't replace that spirit - and it's been gone ever since. Alcohol and drugs, boredom, low self esteem, depression and dispair filled that hole. When you look at the youth today you can see it in them. The drinking has gone up, pot and cocaine runs through the communities big time, as well as abuse- verbal, mental, spiritual, emotional, physical, sexual, lots of child neglect, the teachings of respect gone, suicides, vandalism, low education, and so on. The youth are crying out for help!!! They don't come to us to tell us these things, they don't have to, we just have to look. But we, as adults, most of us, just turn a blind eye to these cries of help. We continue to deny that something's wrong. We are not listening. We continue to pretend that everything's all right. WE PRETEND!!! Signing another agreement will not solve this problem. It is US who have to change! We have to stop denying. We adults have to wake up! We have to set an example, we have to teach, we have to love, we have to give them understanding about the importance of life and how to survive in a healthy manner. The money that will come with the agreement will only allow us to pretend and deny even more. We think that by buying the youth more infrastructure will make them happy. It's wrong to think this. It's the same as giving the child more candy when they cry. This does not work, it only makes the problem worse. Infrastructure is OK - but remember our youth are our future. Giving them back the spirit of independence is the best investment we can make for them.

What about jobs? In Canada, about 80% of all employment is due to entrepreneurs and small businesses. Thats 80% !!. The other 20% is due to government jobs. Which are; political jobs, road and walk way maintenance, hospitals, daycares, teachers and so on. All these jobs cover for only 20% of all the jobs in canada. In Cree land so far, we are only working government jobs, regional and local. How many privately owned Cree businesses are actually out there? Very few. So in Cree land we are still only working at 20% government jobs and 5-10% entrepreneur jobs.

We have not even developed our villages and region. Our regional and local economic development officers in the past 26 years have actually really done nothing. If they really knew what they were doing, or if they were damn serious or really cared, then we would have not been in this situation. They had 26 years to prepare for employment for all our youth today. All their economic developement focus went to bigger external projects like Servinor, and this is outside of our communities. Boy! oh! boy!, the millions and millions we put into that ...and lost. Millions and millions, yet not one of the presidents that was appointed to the position took the seriousness of his position to stay put in his office. He was always gone. Too many hats. This is not a problem with just Servinor, but with almost all our leaders today. They are never in office.

If you are not there behind the steering wheel, your vehicle will go off the road. But hey! its not too late! We can still turn things around ourselves. Long ago, before the arrival of the Europeans, we were very efficient, thrifty, sufficient, skillfull,

healthy spiritually, emotionally, mentally, physically. All in all we were independent self-sufficient people, so full of spirit. We have to apply this to today. Since we signed the first agreement, our spontaneous spirit seems to have vanished. We are no longer spontaneous, we are always in a constant struggle trying to get things done. We seem to be in some kind of an intangible despair. Not knowing what the real purpose is of our existence. We seem to be constantly trying to walk up a down escalator. All our get up and go just seemed to have gotten up and left.

There's a very special man, Greg Bourlan, from a reserve in South Dakota, who totally changed things around for his community. There's an artical about him in Time magazine, on what he has done for his people to become self-sufficient. And no— it was not through casinos or the selling of their land, but through believing in his own people. He believed they still had that spontaneous spirit, it was just a matter of waking it up.

11 years ago they depended totally on easy money (gov. Funds.). He knew in his heart that this was the main problem why people were living in despair. People had no sense of belonging not even to themselve,. People had no sense of reason or purpose for being. People were lost. He went to see the tribal chairman (chief) about this problem, and the chief had no answers to the problem. He said that the chief only knew one way of growth and that was through government handouts and not through our own development. Gre, on the other hand, believed otherwise. He knew that by becoming self sufficient and doing things for ourselves would give the people their purpose back, their sense of pride back of being a people, he gave them back a reason to walk this path of existence. With the former chief, there was unemployment, welfare, drinking and drugging was way up, social proplems galore, The exact same problems we face today as Crees. Although we were multi-millionaires from the signing of the first agreement, still we face the same issues.This we cannot deny.

11 years ago Greg ran for chief and won. Since then welfare went down from 500 families to only 150 familie. Unemployment went down from 75% to 25%. They bought their own hospital, their own college, their own buffalo ranch, their own wellness / treatment center and so on, all from self generated revenues. The government money that they were so depeneant on became a thing of the past. Self generated revenus was in. He turned things around for the better of the people. It was not easy for them to do it. But after ten years, it was worth every second of effort. It shows in the people, especially in the children. There are about twelve thousand of them on the reserve. There are about 14,000 Cree and our land is larger then theirs. So we can do it as a people. Greg had told me personally on the phone that "If you do not provide for yourselves, then you do not live or own your own lives. It will only be the day when you start providing for yourselves that you will prosper and be proud once again."

About 4 months ago when I spoke to him, I explained our situation to him, He replied back saying "You know, that's where we were 11 years ago". This is a true story. This goes to show that we can do it on our own. We have to start believing in ourselves as a people and have faith in the creator. This A.I.P. is a wake up call for us to start getting off our denying butts and start doing things for ourselves. We have to stop singing and dancing and playing all day like the first 2 little pigs, like we've been doing for the past 26 years. Long ago, our ancestors didn't let us do this. The trees didn't just fall down and crawl into our stoves, the geese didn't fly into your tee-pees and just hang themselves over your fire, the water didn't just jump out of the lake and into your water pails, you had to go out and get these things for yourselves or else you died. There was no time for leniancy, we always had to be on the ball, we had to work hard. This life though was very healthy, spiritually, mentally, physically and emotionally, because we were taking care of ourselves.

Since the signing of the first agreement, we have become lazy, spoiled, weak, out of shape, sick with diabetes and cancer, low self esteem, angry, disrespectful towards ourselves, one another and mother earth, alcohol and drug use increased dramatically and so on. Many negative things come back to us when we sell our mother or when we depend on easy-money.

Alternatives? There are many of them. We just haven't really looked into them. In fact we don't even have to look, we know they are there. Why do you think the government really wants to come up in this territory of eeyou eestchee? He sees the opprotunities up here. Look at the town of Raddisson, I see it really prospering, proseoring even faster then our communities. Yet our communities were here long before Raddisson. In fact Raddisson is only supposed to be a maintenance village, not a municipality (another broken promise). I don't think I have to explain this one.

Anyways, I can go on and on, bringing up points but I think I may have got my message through. What you do with this is your choice and I respect that. As we are all children of the creator. But I will leave you with a few last thoughts. Do we really need this when we're not even finished healing from the first agreement? Do we really want to open up the rest of the doors to the south? Do we really want to lose one of our last great majestic rivers? Can we trust the government? Shouldn't they be fulfilling their broken promises first before we sign another one? Aren't we moving too fast into this? Can't we develop on our own? Did the creator give us this land to sell and destroy? Or to cherish and take care of it? Shouldn't we be looking into alternatives before we even sign? The signing was done in complete secrecy. Is it not true that you cannot trust people who keep too many secrets? When you read the Grand Chief's message to the people in the Portage (oct/ 31/ 01, vol 4, # 4) after he was elected Grand chief, and when you read his message in The Nation, he totally contradicts himself. He goes totally against what he was voted for in the first place. Can we really trust or follow a leader who confuses himself and goes against his own words? Did anyone consider that this agreement can split our own people apart which is already taking place? I heard that Hydro makes $13 million a day. If this is true then it takes 6 days for them to get $78 million back. Hmph! Almost makes me want to laugh. We're being ripped off again. Hmphhooooowahh! hah! ha! ha! hah! Oops! sorry, couldn't help myself. You know, we really have to think this over some more. ITS OUR LIFE!!!!. SINCERELY WITH OUR HEADS UP, BY PEOPLE WHO REALLY CARE...

This letter was handed out at a protest that we held at the Ruperts River bridge on the James Bay highway on Dec 9 - 10 / 01 the last days of the famous Val D'or tournament. We managed to stop at least 200 vehicles throughout the 34 hours we sat there. Out of all the people we stopped, only one person spoke for the A.I.P. The majority spoke against it. These people were so pleased and happy to see someone speaking out in this manner. Some people had sent an e-mail to us explaining how they had cried tears as soon as they drove off. This A.I.P. is touching every heart of our people, we really need NOT! to rush into this as it is also our "souls". This A.I.P can rip us apart. Other people I have spoken to are stuck on the fence. So a large majority are "NO" or stuck on the fence and still our leaders are going to sign. Lets be more careful. Its our lives.

With my head up. Roger Orr. Take care.

Indian Band In British Columbia Taxes the Government

On December 7,2001 the Supreme Court of Canada handed down a ruling in a case called *Osoyoos Indian Band v. Oliver (Town)* whereby the Court recognized the ability of Aboriginal bands in Canada to tax the government for using or occupying portions of reserve lands. It seems that in the Indian Act section 83(1)(a) gives Aboriginal bands the right to create by-laws to tax anyone including the government that uses any part of their reserve lands. The Supreme Court of Canada in their decision said that this section should be interpreted broadly as Aboriginal bands are the government of the land and had the right to tax any interests in or use of reserve lands.

The government had argued that s.35 of the Indian Act had given them the right to take the land for public purposes. In answer to this, the Supreme Court of Canada stated that the government could not look at Aboriginal interests in land through the eyes of common law but that Aboriginal interests in land have an important cultural component. Aboriginal peoples have a unique relationship to the land, the value cannot be determined by looking at a fair market value of the land to compensate them. The government further has a fiduciary duty to ensure any land it uses must be done in a way that minimally impacts the band's use and enjoyment of Indian lands. Therefore, if they take land for public purposes, they must preserve the right of bands to continue to cam income from the land.

The following is a conversation with Joseph R. Linkevic, tax administrator for the Osoyoos Indian Band, and his involvement in initiating this case:

the NATION: First of all congratulations Mr. Linkevic, now, could you tell us about your involvement in the Osoyoos case just to come down from the Supreme Court?

Mr. Linkevic: I was working for the Osoyoos Indian Band in 1995/96 as what I would consider tax administrator as I looked at all aspects of reserve land use. There was an irrigation ditch put in place by the Province of British Columbia in the early 1900s and was listed as still being owned by the Province. The maps said the land was "owned" by the Province but it went through our reserve. So I approached the Band Council to advise them that I thought the land should be taxed and could be taxed. The Band Council gave me their consent to proceed so I went to our Board of Review to have them formally request on our behalf that the lands be included in our tax rolls. The Board of Review was set up to be an impartial review and include all taxable property In our jurisdiction. The Board agreed to include these lands.

How did you assess the tax to place on the reserve lands the Province had built on?

I approached the B.C. Assessment Authority, who we used to appraise our taxable properties, to have them include the lands for the irrigation ditch in our tax rolls. The B.C. Assessment Authority represents the provincial government in assessing all taxable lands within the Province. We contracted them to provide not only an impartial assessment of the lands but to also provide unquestioned and most appropriate assessment.

Given that they were the B.C. Assessment Authority, how co-operative were they in this assessment?

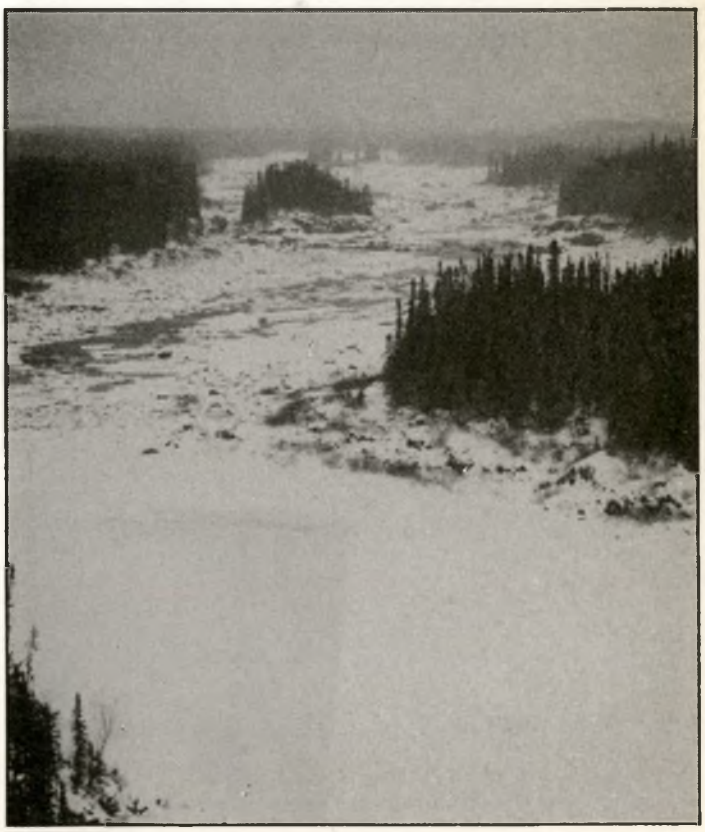
Well, they were contracted to work for us, and if we wanted to have them assess lands for taxation, that was their job. I do not believe they ever thought we would be able to tax the lands because of the ownership issue, but they went ahead and assessed the lands. We needed the information as they had never been valued or assessed for taxes before because they were always either considered reserve land or after the 1900s provincial land. That is what we wanted the Assessment Authority to do and they did it for us.

So after you find out how much the land is valued at for taxing purposes, what do you do?

The next step was to attempt to tax the lands. We divided the land into four individual lots. The taxable property was owned by the Province but held by the Town of Oliver. Our idea was to create a grant in lieu of taxes because taxing jurisdictions do not really tax each other, they create a value and give a grant in lieu of taxes. That is what we wanted - more income for the Band through this taxing mechanism.

So now you have valued the land and set up this grant which is really a taxing arrangement, what next?

Well, of course, the town of Oliver objected to the assessment



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Cree School Board
Commission scolaire Crie

Season's Greetings
with all good wishes
for a Happy New Year
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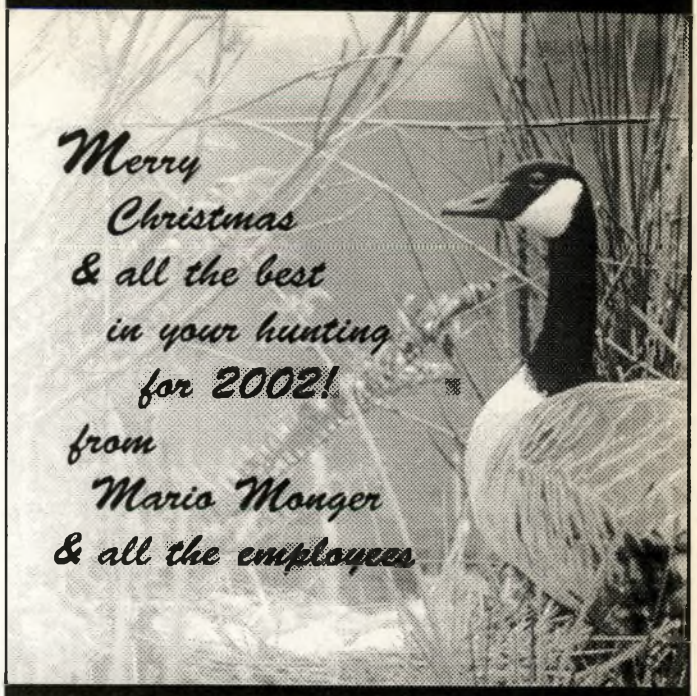

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The Board of Directors
and all employees of the
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wishes everyone a safe
Christmas holiday
with your loved ones &
Happy New Year!

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for a happy holiday season
&
may you all have
the best New Year ever
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of property by the Band. They objected to the Board of Review we had set up to clarify who has the authority to tax in these cases. The Board of Review started a case at the B.C. Supreme Court who said the Band did not have the power to tax as the land had been given up under s. 35 of the Indian Act. We appealed and the Supreme Court of Canada decided to hear the case.

And the Supreme Court of Canada agreed with you that the Band had the power to tax the land that the Province had built structures on, it must have been a good moment for you?

Yes, it was. Although I was not there for the whole process as I resigned as Tax Administrator sometime in 1996 to go to school but am certainly glad the Band Council supported my thinking back in 1995.1 am also very pleased that the Supreme Court has come out with the decision it has, because there are all kinds of ramifications on a national level. All Indian Bands in Canada who have taxing authority should look at this decision very closely, because it could open the door for taxing highway, power lines and other utility services that have "expropriated" Indian reserve for public use. There are great benefits to being a taxing authority for Bands considering this. The taxing authority we exercised in 1996 brought an additional quarter of a million dollars to our community and all we had to expend was really incidental compared to that. The Province and townships around reservations have been collected taxes in one form or another for years so why not us. At the end of the day, I think taxing authority gives a Band more of an equal footing with respect to things like negotiations with local towns and the provincial government.

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So now you have valued the land and set up this grant which is really a taxing arrangement, what next?

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The question is would this apply to the Eastern James Bay Cree Territory?

First at foremost, I would suggest this is a question best answered by legal counsel, who is a member of the Quebec Bar, as there a number of issues that require closer scrutiny. There is first the issue of the extinguishment clauses in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. While the government sought to extinguish all Cree rights and interests in section 2.1, the Agreement says "in consideration of the rights and benefits herein set forth in favour of the James Bay Crees." Again in section 2.2 when talking about the benefits and obligations owed, it says "the whole in consideration" for the surrender of rights. This is why I say a legal opinion should be sought in Quebec to examine this situation more closely, has extinguishment occurred if in the Agreement, the Province has failed to live up to their obligations for which Cree rights in the land were traded? If we look at the balance sheet, has not Quebec taken billions of dollars in resources from the Cree territory in the last 26 years and the Crees are still owed in the hundreds of millions of dollars in promises for services, economic development, justice, etc? Considering the amounts of money the Quebec government has received they have had ample money to accomplish their promises and would not any court agree that 26 years has been more than a reasonable amount of time to give them? Thus, with a substantial breach of the Agreement, would this mean that all the lands and rights would revert back to the Crees? Would we take ownership of the dams, in recognition of the balance sheet showing they have made more than their initial investment and we have been enriching them with profits from our resources for 26 years without receiving what was promised to us? Or, would we be charging rent or taxes in the millions per year for use of our lands, meaning assessing the dams, hydro stations, hydro lines, highways, airports, forestry, mining, etc? Would this not be a re-assertion of our rights to the land as given to us by the Creator, or as the Supreme Court says in the Osoyoos case that Indian Bands are the government of reserve lands, and without the need to rely on agreements that have a history of being disrespected and unfulfilled?

BDO Dunwoody

Best Wishes for a Safe and Happy New Year, and may 2002 be a year for Peace and Prosperity.

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Le conseil d'administration et tout le personnel de la SDBJ profitent de cette occasion pour vous souhaiter un très Joyeux Noël ainsi que leurs vœux de bonheur, santé et prospérité pour la nouvelle année...

Société de développement de la Baie-James
Québec

To all the Cree nations of Eeyou Istchee

Christmas is the favorite holiday for everyone, especially children. It is a time for families to get together to celebrate the holiday in remembrance of the Holy Child who was sent by His Father to earth to save us.

May the Creator bless you all throughout the new year.

Have a safe Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

From the Whapmagoostui First Nation

CLASSIFIEDS

100 – Births

I would like to congratulate the proud parents of Wilfred and Ida Shecapio on the birth of their little girl Chelsey Grace Shecapio, born on November 16, 2001, weight 9 pounds and 13 1/2 ounzes. Take good care of your little angel. From: Elizabeth & Samuel & Family

101 - Birthdays

On this special day, January 7, 2002, we would like to wish our special Grand Mother, Grace Whiskeychan, a happy birthday. We hope you enjoy your special day. God bless you. From your grand daughters, Brenda, Marion, Claudia, Linda, Priscilla, Francine and your grand sons, Bruce, Lee, and Frankie Whiskeychan. P.S. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

We want to wish a happy belated birthday to Christopher Matches November 10, 2001 and to Freda Bobbish November 29, 2001 and happy birthday to my dad Isaac Matches on December 14, 2001 in Chisasibi and to my sister-in-law Peggy Matches November 26, 2001 in Nemaska. Happy birthday to you all and many more birthdays to come. Love always, Rebecca, Juanita, & Emily-Ann Bearskin

A Special Birthday Greeting going out to our precious son, Marcus Elijah Matoush. Who will be celebrating his 2nd birthday on the 13th of Dec. We love you lots!!! Love from: Mommy (Betty), Daddy (Max) and you little sister Maxine. xox

This special birthday greetings going out to my cuz Ms. Lori Ann Wapachee, on December 13, 2001. Always remember how much you mean to me, I see you as my sister. I am proud of you Girl! Keep it up at school..Stay Kewl! From Cuz; Brenda-Rose and of course the little ones (Valeriesh, Shecia and Tara)

Birthday Greetings going out to my sister Selena Wapachee on December 21, 2001. I have not much to wish you but happiness in your life, cause i know things are pretty much cool...Guess I could wish you a Happy New Year...take care Girl! Love Sis, Brenda-Rose

Happy Birthday to you ...Happy Birthday to youuuuu..Happy Birthday to you. It's our Auntie Selena's Birthday. We love you very much...from your nieces; Valeriesh, Shecia and Tara Lynn)

We would like to wish our daddy a happy Birthday on December 19, 2001. Dad, If we had Three Wishes on Your Birthday...we'd make a wish for your health and happiness and your dreams coming true. We'd wish that you would be given whatever your heart desires. And after we were sure that all of these wishes were fulfilled, we'd make one more wish for you -the most important one of all...We'd wish that you'd know beyond any doubt that we love you with all our hearts, and we'll always be here for you no matter what. Love Always: Your daughters, Valeriesh, Shecia, Taralynn and mom.

Happy Birthday to my sister Charlene Wapachee Louttit on December 28th. I wanna take this time to wish you my sister all the happiness you truly deserve, enjoy your day and let me take my adorable nephew home just for a while. Thank you sis for being there when I need a friend or for just letting out something stupid, lol. You are never too fast to judge me, and I appreciate your love and friendship. I love you my sister, take care and take advantage of your day. If you need a babysitter, you know where to find me. With love, your sister Charlotte.

Happy 5th belated Birthday to Leona Trapper on December 6th, 2001in Mistissini. This special day bring you lots of happiness, may your wishes all come true. We love you so much Leona. From Mom & Dad (Lynda, Simon).

Happy, Happy, Happy Birthday to our uncle Alfred Wapachee-Pet on December 7th. We wish we were there to bake you a cake. Hopefully, Valerie will bake you one. We are thinking about you. Love, Alexandria, Jainec & Lillian. North Bay, Ont.

Happy Birthday to my beautiful daughter Rachel Tiffany Salt on December 23rd , 2001 who's in Chisasibi. I really miss you and love you. Happy Birthday & Merry Christmas to you from, love always Mom Ella (Wask.)

Happy Birthday to Rachel Tiffany Salt on December 23rd , 2001from your bro Paul Andrew Salt (Wask.)

Merry Christmas and Happy Birthday to Rachel Tiffany Salt on December 23rd , 2001(Chisasibi) from your sister Bettina Gwendolynn Salt. (Mist.)

Happy Birthday to my aunt Charlene Wapachee Louttit on December 28th. I hope you enjoy your day and please let us take Julian home so you can rest on your day, because I see how much work Julian is, (ha, ha, ha). Your hands are always full. Thank you Charlene for keeping me when my mom has to go out of town, I always enjoy staying with you because I love you and your baby so much and I always enjoy my time with you both. Take care auntie. With lots of love, Abel Petawabano.

102 Weddings

We want to congratulate to my aunt Bridget & Sam Blacksmith in Waswanipi. Their wedding was on December 14, 2001 in Val d'Or. We wish you all the best in life. May you have a long life together. From, Your niece Rebecca, Barry, Juanita,& Emily-Ann Bearskin in Chisasibi.

300 - Personals

I would like to wish a Merry Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to my one and only son Charlot Merle Jolly, the past year has been rough on the two of us, but we made it. First of all, I would like to thank God for taking care of you when I felt like being immature and irresponsible at times. Secondly, Thank you my son for easing up on me and giving me the freedom that I needed. When you get to my age you'll understand, but I am not promising anything. Last but not least, I would like to say "I love you more than anything" and DON'T GROW UP TOO FAST, I can't keep up with you. Love Mommy.

The Nation magazine provides the perfect opportunity for us to wish everyone in Eeyou Istchee only warm best wishes and seasons greetings for the New Year. If you're in North Bay, come and see us. We'll buy the coffee! Charlie Small and Liz Dowdall @ canadorec.on.ca

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Propriétaire: Roger Pearson

Wishing you all the best in the New Year

the Nation

Various facts on this year's C.N.I.T... 20th Edition

(formerly known as Cree Hockey Tournament, Algo-Cree Tournament)

Co-ordinated by John Boudrias (18th year of involvement with annual event)

- 48 teams participated=approximately 600 players
- $15,000 in sponsorships from Val d'Or business
- $5,000 in Cree Nation Sponsors
- All Mistissini final, with overtime winner going to Trappers
- More than 2,500 visitors to Val d'Or
- Opening ceremonies attended by Grand Chief Ted Moses as well as Chief Sam R. Bosum (Oujebougoumou); Chief John Long Chap (Mistissini); Chief Reggie Mark (Wemindji) and Chief David Masty (Whapmagoostui) and representatives from Waswanipi (Robert Kitchen) and Eastmain (Lloyd Mayappo)
- 110 games in all
- 7 categories
- Tiffany Neeposh of Mistissini was Top Scorer in two (2) categories (Broomball & Women's Hockey)
- C.N.I.T. Val d'Or office now located in the Val d'Or arena and will be open periodically from after the holiday season to the Minor edition in March 2002

The Director of Community Services

The Police Coordination Department

Wish to congratulate Roger Sandy, George Gunner, Calvin Blacksmith and Gilles St-Gelais in obtaining their certificates in Police Management Certificate training through the University of Sherbrooke. The Cree Regional Authority wishes them every success in their future studies.

The Police Coordination Department is also grateful to CLMB for their valued assistance in funding this important training for the Cree Police personnel.

From left to right, starting at the top are: Diane Bessette, Ecole Nationale de Police, Pierre R. Turcotte, Academic Director, University of Sherbrooke, Roger Sandy, Police Director of Whapmagoostui, and Gordon McGregor, President of the Quebec Association of First Nations Chiefs of Police.

From left to right, starting at the top are: Diane Bessette, Ecole Nationale de Police, Pierre R. Turcotte, Academic Director, University of Sherbrooke, George Gunner, Ass't Police Director of Wemindji, and Gordon McGregor, President of the Quebec Association of First Nations Chiefs of Police.

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Released by Johnny Trapper, Coordinator of Cree Policing

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